

III. A NEW VARIETY OF FRESHWATER CRAB FROM TRAVANCORE.

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In a small collection of crabs sent for identification by the Director of the Trivandrum Museum were two specimens on which the following remarks are based. They appear to constitute a new variety of the species from a stream in the Cochin State Forests, described as *Paratelphusa malabarica* in the Records of the Indian Museum, vol. vii, part ii, May 1912.

Paratelphusa (Liotelphusa) malabarica, Henderson, var. *travancorica*, nov.

Habitat.—Ponmudi, Travancore, 2500 ft., 30-xii-11. Two specimens (♂ and ♀) and a third in a bad state of preservation.

These specimens agree with *P. malabarica* in general appearance and size, but differ in the following respects. The epigastric and postorbital crests of the carapace are more prominent and form a continuous line in the new variety. The epigastric crests are represented, as in *P. malabarica*, by patches on either side of the somewhat deep mesogastric furrow, but in the variety *travancorica* they are distinctly elevated, and bounded posteriorly by a line representing the crest proper, which is higher than the surface in front of it. This surface shows some minute almost linear elevations. The frontal surface is more convex than in *P. malabarica*, and its anterior margin is no longer straight, but slightly bilobed. A broad shallow excavation, not seen in *P. malabarica*, occurs on either side of the carapace, leading up towards the lateral epibranchial tooth, but it is not continuous with the crescentic cervical groove. This excavation no doubt represents a forward extension of the cervical groove, and it at any rate occurs in the position which the latter would have occupied had it been definitely present. The sixth segment of the male abdomen has the proximal end distinctly wider than the distal, and the length of the segment is only slightly greater than its width; in *P. malabarica* the two ends are of subequal width. The ischium of the external maxillipedes has a distinct, though not sharply cut, longitudinal line on the outer surface. In this last character the new variety resembles *P. austrina*, Alcock, but the latter species has the cervical groove hardly visible, the mesogastric furrow is indistinct, the epigastric and postorbital crests are only just

distinguishable, and the edge of the front is distinct from the edge of the antennular fossæ.

With more material it may hereafter be shown that the present form is entitled to specific rank, but for the present I prefer to regard it as a variety of *P. malabarica*. This determination is equivalent to the admission that certain characters, which have been regarded as of value in separating the so-called species of freshwater crabs, are liable to considerable variation in closely related individuals. It would no doubt be possible, in some cases, to discover slight differences which are more or less constant, among

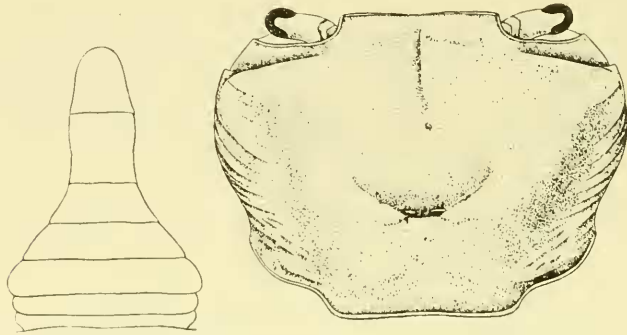


Fig. 1.—*Paratelphusa malabarica*, Henderson, ♂ type, × 3.

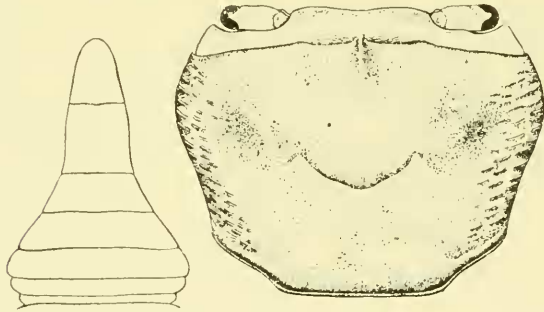


Fig. 2.—*Paratelphusa malabarica* var. *travancorica*, nov., ♂ type, × 3.

individuals belonging to one of the recognized 'species,' if collected from different streams and particularly from those on different hill ranges, but it may be doubted if any benefit would result from the attempt to name such slightly marked varieties. In the new variety just described, the characters on which it is based cannot, however, be described as slight.

This Travancore crab also illustrates the difficulty which sometimes arises in connection with the assignment of a species to one or other of the so-called subgenera. It cannot be said to show obscure epigastric and postorbital crests, which is one of the out-

standing features of the subgenus *Liotelphusa*; indeed in this respect it agrees better with *Barytelphusa*, in which the crests are well defined. It, however, differs from most species of the latter subgenus in the small size of the individuals and the incompleteness of the cervical groove, hence it may be placed in *Liotelphusa*. In any case its affinities with *P. malabarica* are unmistakable, and the latter is clearly a *Liotelphusa*.

The opportunity is taken of figuring the type-specimen of *P. malabarica*, preserved in the Indian Museum, as well as the type of the new variety.

The type of the variety described above (Crustacea Reg. No. $\frac{2936}{10}$) is preserved in the Indian Museum.